



## October “Nutrition Connection”: Cast a Healthy Halloween Spell!

The string of seasonal celebrations is just beginning, and it all starts with a favorite, Halloween. The treats of Halloween are often tricky for health-conscious parents and those trying to manage their weight. This month’s Nutrition Connection will offer up suggestions for avoiding sugar sabotage, while keeping the holiday spirit.

### **CANDY YOU BUY:**

First of all, a good idea is to avoid buying your favorite candies to hand out to Halloween guests, instead, select non-tempting treats .

While you might not win this year’s popularity contest, handing out non-candy options such as glow sticks, boxed dried fruit, fruit squeezables, gum or stickers is still fun. Parents of children with food allergies (i.e.: nuts) will appreciate it as well.

### **CANDY YOUR TRICK o TREATERS BRING HOME:**

**Buy it Back:** Many parents will have their child trade in candy for a small toy or fun outing, and then treats are thrown or given away.

**Donate:** Bags of leftover candy offer an opportunity for a giving lesson. Have your kids make goody bags and share with people such as your active postman. Another idea is to donate non-chocolate candy to organizations such as [soldiersangels.org](http://soldiersangels.org) or [Halloween Candy Buy Back](#) which package it up and send it off to our soldiers overseas.

**Teach them how to SAVOR and ENJOY:** Halloween candy can also be an opportunity to teach our children how to SAVOR and ENJOY food, and to be mindful when we eat.

**Give Treats some Company:** Another idea is “use up” candy by adding it to healthy foods, i.e.: adding M&Ms to trail mix or sprinkle crushed candy into whole wheat muffin batter.

**And one Don't: Avoid Spreading the Love:** Avoid bringing candy to the office to tempt your fellow officemates. Most likely, they don't invite the temptations as well.

**Finally,** Halloween and candy go hand in hand, and a one day sugar rush is a normal passage of this festive holiday!

### **ON A HEALTHIER NOTE...**

One of Halloween's top treats is the pumpkin. This nutritional powerhouse offers much more than a way to decorate your front porch! Canned pumpkin is one of the simplest ways to incorporate this seasonal superfood into your everyday diet. One cup of canned pumpkin provides only 80 calories, 0 grams of fat, 7 grams of fiber, and an array of vitamins and minerals such as iron, vitamin A, and beta-carotene.

Make canned pumpkin a pantry staple and mix it into yogurt, hot cereals, smoothies, cream cheese or any baked good. A family favorite is Thai Pumpkin Soup (see below), which turns canned pumpkin into a nourishing fall dinner.

## Thai-spiced Pumpkin Soup Recipe

2, 14-oz. canned pumpkin  
1, 14 oz. can vegetable or chicken broth  
1-2 Tbsp. peanut butter  
3 Tbsps. unsalted butter, room temperature  
1, 14-ounce can light coconut milk  
1 tsp. (or more) red Thai curry paste  
2 tsp. fine grain sea salt (or to taste)



Add pumpkin and peanut butter to a large pot and warm over medium high heat. Add the coconut milk and curry paste and bring to a simmer. Now add vegetable broth a half cup at a time pureeing between additions until the soup is the consistency you prefer. Bring up to a simmer again and add the salt (and more curry paste if you like).

*Serves six.*

**If you follow these guidelines your everyday foods will be much improved! For more information regarding eating healthy and other nutrition topics, please contact: Jennifer**

**McDaniel, MS, RD, CSSD, LD**

**[mcdanielnutrition@gmail.com](mailto:mcdanielnutrition@gmail.com)**

**Web: [www.mcdanielnutrition.com](http://www.mcdanielnutrition.com)**

**Facebook: McDaniel Nutrition Therapy**